

The Atari Times

March/April 1997

Anti-Atarians Suck!

By Greg George

One of my favorite things to do (besides playing my Atari games) is checking out the Internet chat pages. It's a place similar to a BBS where people trade games, reveal game secrets & tips, and generally keep people informed.

Sometimes non-dedicated Atari people join in and debate the pros and cons of owning an Atari system. Often, they are objective owners of several systems who offer unique perspectives on the Atari scene. These people are entitled to their opinions and I welcome it as a way to keep us all objective.

While I enjoy debating serious people, I absolutely can't stand some who live to antagonize Atarians. They post such intelligent messages like "Atari SUX!" or "Nintendo RULZ!" hoping we'll lash out and start a flame war. And more often than not, they get exactly what they're looking for.

As an example, let me tell you of the moron who tried to impersonate my young friend, Wes Powell on Toad Computers' JagTalk. He made a valiant effort to try to convince us that he (as Wes) was giving up on the Jaguar. Well too many of us know for a fact that Wes is a total Jaguar nut, and do such a thing. He spends so much time on his popular web site, JaguDome, I can literally count on an update every day!!

Besides this heinous act, the person had nothing better to contribute to the conversation than "I HATE ATARI" and "BUY A REAL GAME SYSTEM." As one would expect, people flamed him, but it didn't do much good.

In another similar instance, someone tried to impersonate Brett Daly on his Jaguar chat page. (We think it may have been this same person.) After calling him names for a few posts, we completely ignored him. This got him quite angry and tried to flood the page with the same message. It didn't do him any good, and he left shortly thereafter.

What motivates people to do such things? Don't they have anything better to do than antagonize us Atarians? Why can't they play their games and leave us alone? Don't they have a life?!

It obvious these people are desperate for attention and will try to get it any way possible. If you had a little brother or sister who was (or is) constant pest, you know what I mean. They are happy with any type of attention, even if it is negative. They just want someone to talk to, but they don't know how to get it.

What's the best way to deal with these people? Well, you could always send them an e-mail bomb. But most often, these people don't have the courage to give their e-mail address at all. So, the only other best thing you can do is totally ignore them. Even acknowledging their existence would be asking for trouble. Once they get you hooked, they are virtually impossible to get rid of. Simply telling them to "Get lost!" does absolutely **nothing**. You're just wasting your time.

I know how hard it is to ignore those messages. I want to smack those idiots verbally myself. But you have to remember: These people are not stating a valid opinions. They're only trying to

stir things up. Don't give them the satisfaction!!

What can you do if someone answers them and opens Pandora's Box? It might be worthwhile to send that person a private e-mail asking them to not give the antagonist what he wants. Politely ask them to "shut up" and the bad guy might go away.

However, there are times when it's gotten so bad there's not much you can do. Except fight fire with fire. Find out what their weakness is, and exploit it. If they love Nintendo, bash Nintendo mercilessly. Use some of their exact quotes back on them. If they impersonate you, impersonate them back. Be as immature towards them as they are to you.

It's ashame there are a few slags on the 'net who don't take pleasure in playing games. They'd rather pester the people who do! But if you can hold your tongue, these morons will lose interest and move on to less intelligent chat areas.

In This Issue:

Fever Pitch & European Soccer Reviews - Page 3

4-Play Interview - Page 5

8-Bit Obscure - Page 4

Theme Park Guide 3 - Page 7

Brett Daly's Profile - Page 6

The Three Gringos! - Page 4

The Atari Times #9 March/April 1997

The Atari Times is your newsletter! Feel free to send E-Mail to any of the following people:

Editor:

Greg "Fruitman" George
greggeorge@worldnet.att.net

Contributing Writers:

Brett J. Daly
jfpn@usa.net

Lee & Lori Krueger
leekru19@nwlk.com

Andrew Robertson
andrew.robertson@scomag.co.uk

Taz

TazEatWabt@aol.com

Send all snail mail letters, subscriptions (free!), cheats, submissions, and other yackity-schmackity to:

Greg George
1531 Stevens Loop Rd.
Babson Park, FL 33827

CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

Apparently, some people know how hard it is, to produce a newsletter of this magnitude by ones self!!

First there was Taz from Long Island, NY. He contributes so much, you'd think he was subscribing to one of those expensive video game magazines!

Next was Ryan Bullock of Murray, UT who basically sent me enough for a years subscription. IF he lived overseas!

Jeff Thompson of Norwalk, OH made a last minute contrib this month. Thanks Jeff. We'll try to get to your BS & WTR Q's!

Finally, the biggest single contribution ever arrived from Michael Szoke of Kansas City, MO. I can't thank you enough Michael. Go Cardinals!! :-)

These people make the NL possible. Thanks again, guys!

Newsline...

Atari Times Web Returns!

Hi everyone! I'm quite excited about the recent subscriber surge in the newsletter. It's great to know that people still care about Atari and it's products.

My strange sense of humor may have confused some people in the past about the total number of subscribers to the NL. It's almost hit the 200 mark (U.S.) and 30 Overseas/Canada. Keep spreading the word!

The other big news this month is that *The Atari Times* is back on the web. I was offered a free web page with 25 megs of space, but that person never got back to me even though I e-mailed him several times. Distracted, I turned to GeoCities, and immediately uploaded many of the back issues, the Jaguar rating list, special articles, and pictures that were not able to make it to the printed copy of the NL. Also, I've decided to create a text-only version so it can be freely distributable to anyone, not just web browsing people. (ie, its easlily uploadable to BBSs and such.) From here on out, you'll be able to check my web page for all things related to Atari and *The Atari Times*. If you'd like to check out the new *Atari Times* web page, the url is: <http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Arcade/8341/>. Be careful, Geo Cities is case sensitive.

To Subscribers Outside the US

This newsletter really does take a lot of time, effort, and money to produce. And one of the largest expenses comes from mailing them overseas. The United States Post Office charges *me* \$1 dollar to mail overseas and \$.55 to mail to Canada and Mexico. And when you have 30 people... That accounts for nearly 1/3rd of my postage costs!

That's why I have decided that this will be the last issue I mail to

non-contributors who live outside the United States. If you'd like to still read the NL, you're quite welcome to. Each issue will be uploaded to the web page a few days after the paper version is mailed.

If you do live outside the U.S. and would like to continue receiving the paper NL, I'm requiring a monetary contribution for the postal cost for each issue you'd like to receive. That would be \$.55 per issue in Canada and \$1 U.S. dollar per issue for the rest of the world. On each address label I stick on your issue, there will be a number informing you of how many you have remaining. This is the easiest way for me to keep track of this, as I'm hardly an organized person!

Please make all checks and money orders to Greg George and make a note telling me how many issues you are donating for. No, I don't accept Pounds, Yen, Marks, or chickens as payment!! U.S. dollars only!

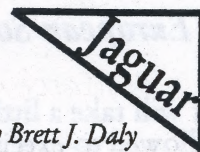
If anyone has any questions, please feel free to write me at: greggeorge@worldnet.att.net

Iron Soldier II delayed...

The other news this month is that no one has received IS2 yet! It seems that Telegames is having trouble with certain encryption algorithms within the Jaguar CD. In other words, we're going to have to wait a few more weeks until they get it figured out. No one knows how this will affect the release of *World Tour Racing*, but I would speculate Telegames will have learned to get around this before WTR's release date.

Rumors have been circulating that Telegames has also licenced the remaining 90% finished Jaguar games including *Slam Racer*. Buy the new Jag games people!!

Fever Pitch Soccer: It's a kick!



By Brett J. Daly

Fever Pitch Soccer was one of the latter releases by Atari and was overlooked by many. It was the second soccer game to make an appearance on the Jaguar and was the first published by Atari. The other, *Sensible Soccer*, was published by Telegames.

Fever Pitch Soccer opens with an upbeat track and as you progress through the options screens you are given a wealth of options. FPS consists of 50 teams and also allows you to play in either a tournament or an exhibition. The tournaments are very extensive as you begin playing against small nations such as Iran and Iraq and progress to face large soccer nations like Brazil and Italy.

Another interesting feature in this game is the fact your players can gain star status. As you progress through the tournament, you are given the option to enhance your players skills by giving them a star status. For example: If an attacker is given star status his shot speed is increased immensely. This can add a bit of spice to the games.

The in-game graphics are of an overhead variety and the players are fairly small, but not as small as in some soccer games that are available. The players have a very respectable amount of detail for their size and the other fixtures in the game such as the field (the field type changes from game to game), goal, and fans are done as you would expect. FPS also includes short full animation sequences after each goal and after a card, which are done fairly well. The overall graphical package is decent, but certainly does not take advantage of the Jaguar's capabilities.

The music in FPS is sparse, basically just taking place away from the game, as during the game you get crowd noise and the other noise fixtures in a soccer game. The noises are done pretty well for the most part and overall have a positive effect on the game, though there is nothing ground-breaking here either.

The gameplay in FPS is the game's high point. The play is very fast and easy to catch on to, and is, what makes this game a

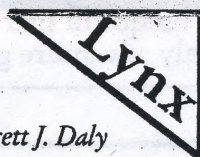
success. You are allowed to block, steal, slide tackle along with all the other things you would expect to be able to do in a soccer game and are easily executable. Also, passing is quite easy and you can adjust your shot by holding the button down along with being able to curve the ball.

Fever Pitch Soccer offers nothing groundbreaking regarding its graphics and sound, but the gameplay is very good. I found this game to be a lot of fun with its fast play and easy controls. If you are in the market for a good, fun soccer game and do not mind not seeing anything top line graphically I would consider giving Fever Pitch Soccer a good look.

Fever Pitch Soccer
By: Atari/Distinctive
For: Jaguar
Type: Sports

Graphics: 73%
Sound: 75%
Gameplay: 88%
Overall: 78%

European Soccer Challenge Scores!



Brett J. Daly

European Soccer Challenge

was the second soccer game to touch down on the Lynx and was Telegames' (who will soon be releasing two new Lynx games) first Lynx sports title. ESC allows you to choose from more teams than you will probably ever get a chance to play which is 170 from 32 countries! ESC also allows for two player play via the Comlynx cable and you are allowed to play in either a friendly match or a

tournament.

Once you turn on the game, you are greeted with a quality soundtrack while going through the options screens. The graphics are of very high quality and you are generally allowed to see 1/4 of the field. Also, there is a very good use of detail and colors in this game. The players are of a very good size. They're small enough to give you a very good view of the field, but not so small that you are left squinting. And despite their size they still

exhibit a very fair amount of detail. Graphically, ESC excels and was done about as perfectly as it could be on a portable.

On the other hand, the sound effects in this game are far from perfect. The music only occurs before and between games which is well done, but the effects during the game though are very basic and the noise is rather sparsely used. You hear the basic sounds of the ball being kicked, the refs whistle and that is about it.

The gameplay is very well done and the control is very responsive and done nicely. Though

Continued On Page 4

European Soccer - from Page 3

it will take a little learning. You are allowed to execute the full slate of soccer moves and of course you need to avoid getting the cards which will be given in this game as expected. My only minor gripe is that I find the players speed to be a little slow at times. But maybe it is just because I am used to the overly fast controls of **Fever Pitch Soccer** on the Jaguar. Overall, the gameplay is very well designed and makes this game a large success!

European Soccer Challenge is a very good soccer game and is one of the best sports games on the Lynx. It's superior to it's counterpart in **World Class Soccer**. This game is done to near perfection in almost all areas with the exception of sound. If you are in the market for a soccer game for the Lynx, European Soccer Challenge is highly recommended and Krisalis Software deserves to be commended for this effort!

European Soccer Challenge
By: Telegames/Krisalis
For: Lynx
Type: Sports

Graphics: 90%
Sound: 62%
Gameplay: 86%
Overall: 86%

8-bit Obscure: Dragonstomper

2600

By Lee & Lori Krueger

Well another month is upon us and yet another unknown game has graced the offices of The Atari Times. (Yeah, like I have an office or anything.) Lee and Lori work extra hard on these reports, but I'm often unable to include the entire article. To find the entire article, including past ones, look on the web at: <http://www.primenet.com/~rworne/>

Title: Dragonstomper

Year Of Release: 1982

Developer: Starpath Corporation
(Formerly Arcadia Corporation)

Programmer: Stephen Landrum

Accessories: Supercharger and a cassette player or Supercharger, Starpath CD, and CD player.

Comments

Lee Krueger wrote:

I was the first kid on the block to get this game. When I got my Supercharger w/Phasor Patrol, I saw the advantages right away. I gobbled up every Supercharger game as they came out. My first multi-load game was **Escape From the MindMaster**. I was totally blown away!!! **DragonStomper (DS)** is unique in that it is and was the only adventure game of its type on

the 2600. Up until that point, I had only seen games like it on the Apple II computers at the High School. DS blew away any game I played on the Apple at that time. I still wonder how they packed all that gameplay into the 2600. WOW!!! It has my vote for the 2nd best 2600 game of all time. It has it all, playability, good graphics, and fantastic replay value. And who could forget this warning on the cave entrance: "ABANDON ALL HOPE, YE WHO ENTER HERE". I still can remember the tune it plays when you finally slay the dragon. Dun da dunt ta, da dunt ta dun ta da. What tun is that anyway? I remember that I never could get the amulet without killing the Dragon.

Foxglove wrote:

I love that game!!! 2nd favorite to **Adventure** at the time. I never could beat it though. Always died at the Dragon(I was only 9 yrs old!). Is there an ending? Hmm..maybe I should break mine out and dust it off. Its been a while...

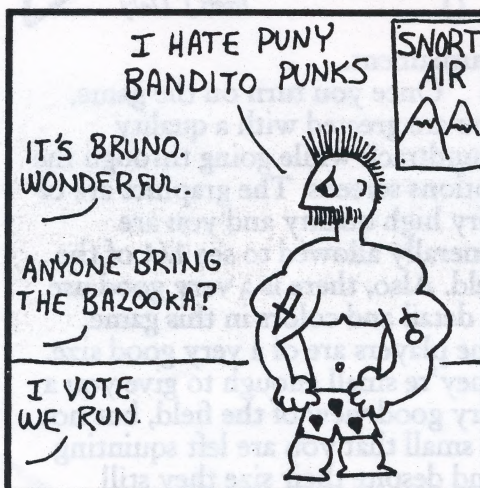
Rating 1=Very Poor

Scale: 5=Very Good

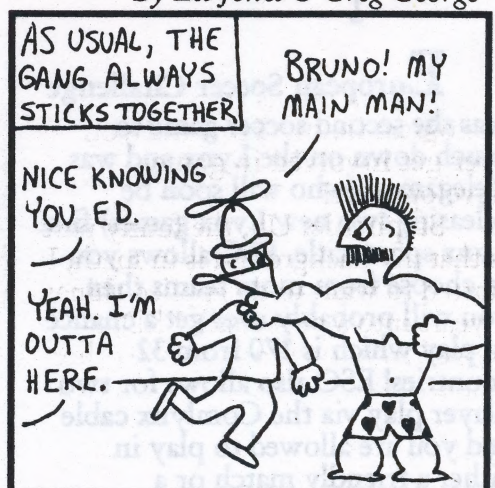
Graphics: 4 Sound: 4

Gameplay: 5+ Overall: 5++

The Three Gringos

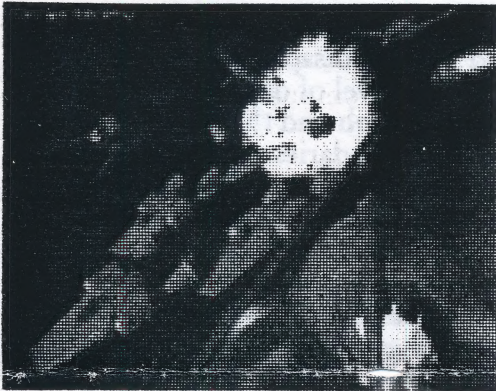
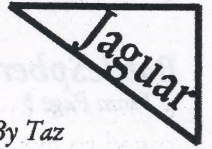


By Les Jones & Greg George



BattleSphere Programmers Interview

By Taz



(Note: I took my past e-mail correspondences with 4-Play and compiled them into this short "4-Play interview" article. In case you haven't heard of 4-Play's first Jaguar game, **BattleSphere**, this game combines the best elements of games like **Descent**, **X-Wing** and **Tie Fighter**, and **Star Raiders** into a spectacular result. **BattleSphere** also allows up to *eight* Jaguars to be linked for networked gameplay and up to *sixteen* people can play at the same time (8 teams of 2 people each. One player is a pilot, while the other is a gunner)! 4-Play consists of Scott Le Grand - Head coder and **BattleSphere** creator; Stephanie Wukovitz - Music and computer voice; Doug Engel (T-Bird) - Network programmer, artist; and Tom Harker - Business, Catbox designer. The play tester for **BattleSphere** is Mark "Stingray" Santora.)

Steph, Scott, your academic background seems to be in biological fields. How did you ever get involved in game development?

Stephanie: Uh, the funny part is that my background is in math, I started to want to do applied things 2 years into a pure math PhD, moved from one coast to the other into a Biomath PhD program, and now do a lot of coding, thinking about protein structure and

crystals, and just generally feel a lot happier. Scott works in the next lab doing a lot of the same sort of things (his background is biology), but he's been writing games since he could talk basically, mostly just for fun... he had a cult following in HS. We started going out over 6 years ago, and when he decided to do **BattleSphere**, since I also compose, I was a natural choice for music I guess. And I can code (on future projects).

Scott: I played my first computer game (**Colony**) in 1971. I started writing computer games in 1976. By the time I got to college, I knew more Comp Sci than the typical graduate so I majored in Biology because I figured that's where all the interesting problems would lie for computers in the future. In the meantime, I wrote a bunch of networked computer games. Then, after grad school, I decided to get back into video game development.

Mark "Stingray" Santora seems to really hate the Atari Jaguar and its games. What do you think of the Jag?

Stephanie: Nah, he's bitter about Atari, with good reason. As we are. I don't program in assembly language, only C, so I can't comment personally on the machine, but I hear lots of screams of frustration coming out of Scott's

study. :-). He seems to like programming the Jag, but not the large number of hardware bugs. Of course, any console has these.

Scott: I really enjoy programming the Jaguar.

T-Bird: The Jag has so much untapped potential. Atari never properly exploited the potential. They really should have hired some crack programmers to make decent libraries for the thing before it was released. The same things which make it hard to program make it powerful.

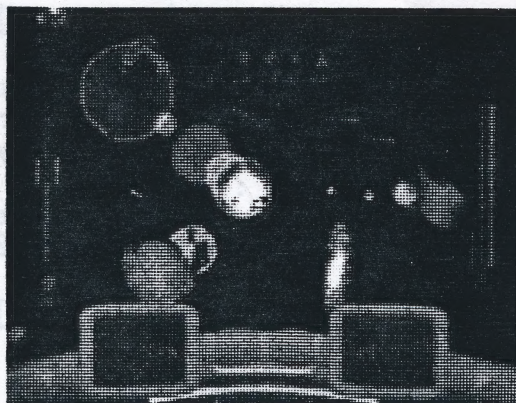
How does **BattleSphere** compare to other games like **Descent 1&2** or **Sony PlayStation** games?

Stephanie: Rather favorably. Most PSX games are not very much fun, or they're too short, or something like that. We don't have buttloads of T-mapping (not possible at our framerate) but we *are* fun, and as you know we *do* look good. **Descent** is a wonderful game... in my opinion we are as fun as **Descent**.

Why isn't 4-Play releasing **BattleSphere** for the Saturn or PSX? I mean **Rayman** was released for the Jag, Saturn, PSX, and PC.

Stephanie: Well, maybe Ubisoft had some money. We got our Jag development kit for free. If someone offers us money for a port, we will do it. We have to like eat and stuff. :-)

T-Bird, you mentioned on the internet that this game will feature another "first" for the Jag. Do you mean something that only the Atari Jaguar can do, or something that has never been



Continued On Page 6

BattleSphere Interview - From Page 5

done before on the Jag?

T-Bird: Something that has never been done before on the Jag.

T-Bird also mentioned something about a "Battle Sphere modem". Is he joking?

Scott: We have the technology and know how to do a "Battle Sphere modem" so we can make one if we want to, but it's costly to develop. T-Bird and Tom are handling this.

What will 4Play do about marketing BattleSphere? Any TV commercials or US Tour show-casing the game planned? Do you think BattleSphere will improve Jag sales?

Stephanie: I don't know exactly, probably not, and slightly. :-). Better info from Tom Harker (ICDINC@genie.geis.com).

Mark, since you're testing Battle Sphere, do you think this game will be a contender for Game of the Year?

Mark: Yes.

T-Bird: I've played it... it RULEZ!

Could you please give me your best guess when Battle Sphere will be released?

Stephanie: We don't want to give anything firm ('cause if we're wrong, people poke fun).

Good luck on the completion of BattleSphere.

Stephanie: Thankee... we just want to finish the damned thing. :-)

For more info on 4-Play and screenshots, previews, and NGO's Quicktime movie clips of BattleSphere check out 4-Play's BattleSphere web site at: <http://www.best.com/~sebab/dvidgames/dsphere/sphere.shtml>

Profile Atarian: Brett Daly

My first extended video game experience was on a friends Atari 7800, and that was when I really got into video games. I can remember enjoying *Centipede* quite profusely on the 7800, but my favorite game on the grand old system was *Pole Position II*. I played that quite a bit, even though at the time I was pretty bad at it (I always like racers, I can't wait for *World Tour Racing*).

My allegiance to Atari really began with the Lynx, as it was the first Atari system I actually owned. I at the time was looking for a portable system, and was looking at a Game Gear, but then I picked up a Buyers Guide issue of a magazine and saw what the Lynx had to offer and went forth. I always enjoyed the games the Lynx had to offer as they were unique to what you could find elsewhere. My collection grew to over 30 games and as you can imagine when I started hearing rumors of a new Atari 64-bit system I was quite excited!

When the official news about the Jaguar came forth I saved up and prebooked the system in September '93. I finally received the system in December of '93 with much anticipation (Atari was slow

at meeting demand at the launch) and was not disappointed! I enjoyed the great level of depth of *Cybermorph* and the fact that it had no boundaries and the grand majority of Jaguar games I enjoyed to a similar if not greater extent!

Well, that brings me to the current time as now I have a collection of about 30 Jaguar cart and CD games. It is real tough for me to point out favorite Jaguar games as I have enjoyed the overwhelming majority that I have played, but My favorite game would probably have to be *Battlemorph*, with games like *Tempest 2000*, *Alien vs. Predator*, *Iron Soldier* (can't wait for *IS2*), *Towers II* among others running right up there.

My reason for being such an Atari loyalist as I mentioned about the Lynx games is the uniqueness all the games tend to have, Jaguar games tend to have more depth than most games on other systems and tend to be exclusive for the most part. I am looking forward to the new games and support Telegames has offered for the Jaguar and Lynx and hopefully we'll see many more games to come as I look forward to that in the future!

SHOOTER'S ZONE

Breakout 2000 (Jaguar)

Enter cheats after brick formation before your ball is released):

- * Breakthrough ball : 7+8+9+1
- * Lightning ball : 7+8+9+2
- * Attract ball : 7+8+9+3
- * Catch mode on : 7+8+9+4
- * 99 balls : 1+3+5

BrainDead 13, Dragon's Lair, Space Ace (Jaguar)

Replay scene: Pause, Pause

Theme Park (Jaguar)

To get all the shops and rides, sink all your money into shops research, then wait until April, two years later.

To adjust the screen position, hold OPTION and press Left or Right.

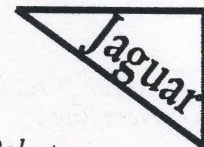
Towers II (Jaguar)

God Mode: Pause, 3+7, 1+9

Theme Park Playguide

Part III

By Andy Robertson



The Stock Market:

To have a degree of success in the stock market all depends on having a fundamental knowledge of how it actually works. The goal is very simple: Buy low, Sell high; and you'll be making lots of money (not to mention all the dividends you get in between). The main challenge for the stock market amateur is mainly how to buy any shares (that is, before you opponents do).

You can count on unowned companies having shares being available at three times:

1. When the company has just started - Companies are added a few at a time for the first few years of the game. You can take this opportunity to acquire initial shares in the companies then.

2. When the company is doing badly - Clearly, no-one wants to own bad shares, since as their value drops, you are losing money. However, they may not stay bad forever, and when they turn, you'll have an ideal opportunity to get some shares dirt cheap (provided you can beat you opponents to it). The hard part is knowing when they have hit rock bottom.

3. When the companies stock doubles - When stock obtains a high enough value, the existing shares are halved in value, and the number of shares is doubled. These extra shares are initially unowned, so when this happens, it provides a great opportunity for obtaining some good shares (if you can beat you opponents to it that is).

At all other times, you'll have to be lucky to get your hands on 'good' stock.

One thing to remember is that Theme Park calculates the major financial changes at the end of each month. So to 'wheel and deal' on the stock market, you need only check the share prices once at the

start of each month, and can spend the rest of your time running your park.

Shops And Rides:

The information and tables on all the shops, rides and scenery are available in the latest version of this playguide. You can obtain this directly from myself at - andrew.robertson@scomag.co.uk

Below is lots of varied hints and strategies just thrown together.

Bring up the info screen for a sideshow like Duck Shoot. Put the price per game to 998. Put the probability of winning to 70% and lower the value of the prize to 400. Easy money..

One important thing to note is that admission prices alone will not provide enough revenue for your park to operate. That's where food, merchandise, & game units come into the picture. Combined with front gate admission prices, the revenue that food, merchandise, & game units generate should start making you a tidy profit.

Rides justify gate prices, shops and sideshows make extra money make sure you maintain a profitable ratio of rides:shops:sideshows. Each time you add an extra ride, your admission price can be increased.

Don't invest too much money in research as these expenses are incurred PER MONTH.

For shops, it is possible to reclaim the area under the shop for other objects (except the square directly under the shop - see this in tiny mode).

You can reclaim this area by erasing the ground squares beside the shop (i.e. Big Time Fries has 8 squares that can be re-used) This will change the grass from short "used" grass to normal "usable" grass.

You can also do the same to

the square directly under the shop (just click "No" when it prompts you to confirm the delete operation), but the only thing you can put down is a path AND the little peeps will ignore the shop and walk right through it.

With this method you can pack MUCH more into your park if you really want to (you effectively reduce the space requirements for each shop to a single square!). However, It looks pretty messy.

Some Few Pieces Of Advice

1. Listen to the advisor:

The only things he tells you should be obvious things you either over-looked or forgot!

2. Listen to the little people:

Spend some time surveying customers to fine tune your prices.

- Extra sales may provide more income than extra profit

- Extra sales means faster usage of stocks (= more money)

- Keep the peeps happy.

3. Prizes are valuable income.

Try to keep your ratings good. A single excellent rating is better money than all average ratings!

4. Park employees get paid

whether they work or not

Only hire handymen, mechanics and guards as they are needed, and keep shifting your entertainers to where they are needed (so they earn their pay, and make the little people happy).

(You can find this complete playguide on The Atari Times web page, or you can go to Andy's next month! His url is: <http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Alley/7532> Or, you can e-mail him with any suggestions, comments or questions. See Page 2 for The Atari Times web or Andy's address. - Ed)

